

## **Maryland Resource Parent Association (MRPA)**

### **2012-2013 Initiatives and Activities**

In addition to basic operating expenses, the MRPA shall fund and support the following activities that are aligned to current-year and long-term organizational goals, as follows:

*Goal 1: More effectively advocate for the needs of Maryland resource parents by providing technical assistance to appropriate government committees and effective communication of broad social that impact resource parents.*

Initiatives:

- MRPA will participate with the Department of Human Resources in the development of policies that support recent (2012) proposed changes to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). MRPA will specifically seek to ensure that policies ensure that resource parents are informed and treated with respect when a decision to close a resource home due to lack of placements or lack of need are being considered.

*Goal 2: Support the development of robust, effective local associations in all jurisdictions.*

Initiatives:

- MRPA will seek to include all local associations under a 501(c)(3) Group Exemption, unless those associations have already undertaken a 501(c)(3) determination.
- MRPA will provide basic services to facilitate operations to those local associations whose goals and activities are closely aligned to those of MRPA. That support is to include: development and hosting of websites for local affiliates, providing accounting packages to include consults with the MRPA accountant for local associates, provide telecommunication and/or web conferencing services to promote more effective meetings for local associations, and provide targeted training for local association officers and board members.
- MRPA will consult with local association and target grant funding to address specific local association issues. Grant funding will be prioritized to ensure that those associations that are actively participating in MRPA activities are prioritized.

*Goal 3: Implement an effective communications strategy for MRPA to increase awareness of MRPA activities at all levels including local associations, local departments, and the general membership.*

Initiatives:

- MRPA will develop a long-term (looking out 5 years) strategic plan.
- MRPA will develop a comprehensive communications strategy that supports the strategic plan and is aligned with current year goals and objectives.
- Aligned with the communications strategy, MRPA will continue to improve its web-presence to include tools to manage and communicate more effectively with its members and local affiliates
- The Maryland Resource Parent Association will collaborate with the SSA to organize and plan an annual State wide Resource Parent recognition event in May of 2013. MRPA will establish a committee and receive SSA guidance as it manages the detailed coordination of the event.

*Goal 4: More effectively engage local jurisdictions in MRPA committees and activities.*

Initiatives:

- To promote inclusion, share information, communicate and provide training upon request, members of the MRPA will visit local Resource Parent Associations as well as nonmember resource parents and local DSSs.
- MRPA will plan initiatives to incentivize increased participation in MRPA activities.

*Goal 5: Conduct regional conferences in partnership with SSA, the University of Maryland, and other team members to educate and raise awareness on issues pertaining to the needs of Maryland's at-risk children.*

- The MRPA will sponsor four regional conferences with the planning assistance from the local DSS, the local Resource Parent Association and DHR/SSA. The MRPA will work with local associations, local departments, and DHR to focus these conferences on issues/areas that are of most concern and benefit for resource families.
- The MRPA will develop a working relationship with all of the local DSSs and encourage their support for regional conferences.

*Goal 6: Promote awareness of the unique educational issues and challenges that face Maryland's at-risk children of school age*

- The MRPA will seek invitations to attend both the State and the Local Teen Advisory Councils to make presentations and seek their input concerning teen support and provide feedback from foster parents concerning their expectations.
- MRPA will support DHR/SSA in all of its efforts to address the issues relating to teen care and teen transitioning. The association will use an inclusive team approach that will bring together a diverse array of human resources to support new and creative Social Service Administration initiatives. The MRPA will seek to be included in some of the internal planning efforts to support our teens.